

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 10-11 are all the claims pending in the application. Applicants add claims 10 and 11 by way of this Amendment to further define the invention as explained below.

The previous grounds of rejection have been withdrawn in view of the following new grounds of rejection.

Claims 1 and 2: Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reed et al. in view of Rasenberger '001.

As noted by the Examiner, Reed fails to teach or suggest the “single connecting member” of the claimed invention. The Examiner turns to Rasenberger to supplement this deficiency. In particular, Rasenberger discloses a member 25 to limit pivotal movement of the axis.¹ The Examiner argues that it would have been obvious to add this arrangement to Reed to provide structural stability to the Reed apparatus.

As shown in Fig. 3 of the application, the single connecting member 16 is attached to the bottom of the vehicle body 3 (frame plate 11) using bolts 12.² These bolts 12 are also used to fix the differential-housing DH and the axle-shaft AH to the under part of the vehicle body 3.³ In this exemplary embodiment, four bolts 12 are used to fix the differential-housing DH and the

¹ Rasenberger, col. 7, lines 40-41.

² Specification (as revised), page 12.

³ Specification (as revised), pages 8 and 12.

axle-shaft AH to the under part of the vehicle body 3, and three bolts 12 are used for attaching the single connecting member 16 to the bottom of the vehicle body 3.⁴

Therefore, the differential-housing DH and the axle-shaft AH are not detached from the under part of the vehicle body 3 even if the single connecting member 16 is detached from the bottom of the vehicle body 3. This is because the differential-housing DH and the axle-shaft AH are fixed to the bottom of the body 3 by at least one bolt 12. Thereby, the replacement between the crawler and tire can be achieved with ease.

Rasenberger fails to disclose this structure. In Rasenberger, the member 25 is connected to the vehicle 1 by means of the flange 26.⁵ There is no explicit detail of the connection between the flange 26 and vehicle body. Moreover, there is no suggestion, implicitly or otherwise, that the same bolts that connect the driving shaft to the vehicle body can also be used to connect the member 25 to the vehicle body.

In view of the above, even if the references were combined, one of ordinary skill in the art would fail to arrive at the claimed invention according to claim 1.

Claim 2 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1, by virtue of its dependency therefrom.

Claims 3 and 4: Claims 3 and 4 are rejected as being unpatentable over Reed and Rasenberger and further in view of Domenighetti. These claims are patentable for at least the

⁴ See Figs. 3-5.

⁵ Col. 7, lines 46-48.

same reasons as claim 1. Namely, Rasenberger and Domenighetti fail to teach or suggest the structural relationship between the bolt attachment of the single connecting member and the driving shaft to the vehicle body.

Claims 5 and 6: Claims 5 and 6 are rejected as being unpatentable over Reed and Rasenberger, and further in view of Muro '133. These claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Namely, Rasenberger and Muro fail to teach or suggest the structural relationship between the bolt attachment of the single connecting member and the driving shaft to the vehicle body.

Claims 10 and 11: Applicants add claims 10 and 11 to further define the invention. These claims clarify the structural attachment of the single connecting member to the body. These features are discussed at pages 10-11 of the specification and illustrated in the corresponding Figures. None of the cited references teaches or suggests this structure and thus, these claims are patentable.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 10/067,936

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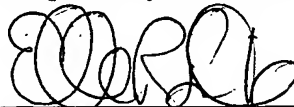
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